

Hiv and Aids: Factors Sustaining Risky Sexual Behaviour among Female Fish Dealers in Fish Landing Beaches in Kisumu County, Kenya. 2013

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Abstract:

HIV and AIDS remain a major global public health challenge and is prevalent plainly in sexually active people in the society. Approximately-33 million people were estimated to have been infected with HIV world wide by the end of the year 2011. An overwhelming majority of these cases (95%) are concentrated in the developing countries; with a substantial proportion of over 60% in Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounting for over 60% of all HIV cases. Around the world, a variety of cultural practices, social institutions, norms and values increase women's risks to contracting HIV infection. In most societies, the status and interest of women are considered subordinate to that of their male counterparts. Thus, they are often powerless to protect themselves from unwanted sexual advances, hence endure sexual coercion and abuse. Today, HIV infection spread fastest in conditions of poverty, powerlessness and lack of information. Among the categories of women most vulnerable are fish vendors in the Lake Victoria beaches, who mainly have to depend on male boat owners for the supply of fish for their daily sale. It is this concern that prompted this study. The objective of the study was to identify factors that sustain risky sexual behaviour among female fish dealers in fish landing beaches in Kisumu District that could lead to HIV infection. The study was conducted in four fish landing beaches in Kisumu County. The research design was a survey. The target population was 601 female fish dealers and 152 fishermen in selected fish landing beaches. The study sample consisted of a third of the population which consisted of 200 female fish dealers and 52 fishermen. The instruments of data collection were structured interview for female fish dealers and fishermen/boat owner respectively and observation guide. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis were use guided by research objectives. The study confirmed that the female fish dealers seek support and security from men by trading in sex. Female fish dealers who come from poor and unstable family environments are likely to be lured into unprotected sexual intercourse to sustain a regular supply of fish from the respective fishermen at the fish landing beaches. The study concluded that knowledge of HIV and AIDS did not result in behaviour change among the female fish dealers as a number of them still believed in having premarital sex, polygamous marriages and extramarital sex. The number of those who believe in having sex without condom was still high and that socio-cultural and economic factor remain a threat to increasing risky sexual behaviour that may predispose female fish dealers to HIV infection. Among the recommendations were; Campaigns on awareness of HIV and AIDS should be scaled up and there be provisions of female condoms which should be accompanied with education on the correct and consistent use, as well as civic education on life skills on how to avoid indulging in risky sexual behaviour. Further the Ministry of Culture and Social Services should design policies and modalities of advising the female fish dealers against

believing in their culture even when they are repugnant and likely to fuel HIV infection. Female fish dealers should be encouraged to form cooperative societies and be empowered financially to put up refrigerating plants along the fish . landing beaches to enable them to buy fish from a central place to reduce the likelihood oftheir being lured by the fishermen into risky sexual relationships.